

COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, March 6, 2026

Present: Brad Bortner, Pina Mingace, Mirian Bremer, Daisy Monsalve, Chris Lindgren, Leslie Hergert, Dan Cronin, Tania Mederios, Ellen Ellis

Council on Aging Staff present: Ashley Speliotis, Connie Lorenti

Location: This meeting was held in person at the Holland Street Senior Center, located at 167 Holland Street, Somerville, MA 02144. These meetings are open to the public and all are welcome.

The Council's primary responsibility is to advise the Council on Aging in the promotion and implementation of programs and services to address the needs of the community's older population.

1. Call to order: 11:14am
2. Approval of Minutes
 - Minutes approved by Brad Bortner, seconded by Marian Bremer.
3. New Business
 - Guest Presenter: Henry Jung
 - Presented on bullying in the senior community. Spoke about attending presentations on the prevailing issue of bullying in senior communities. Spoke about how he has attended training on how to give presentations regarding domestic abuse and bullying against community members.
 - Spoke about the current trends in bullying in senior housing.
 - Spoke of past trainings for small groups where participants shared their stories and there was time for role play. Board voiced their thoughts about participants sharing their stories vs the desire to remain anonymous.
 - Over the last few months, the SCOA has seen an increase in incidents of bullying—incidents include, name calling and telling people where they can and cannot sit. Each of these incidents was addressed by COA staff.
 - Pina suggested different artwork and posters which could be created. Tania shared she would put together a Kindness sign that she has from working in the schools.
 - Review of Transportation Flyer and Marketing Subcommittee

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- Overview of marketing subcommittee provided. They spoke broadly about the website, awareness campaigns, and data and reporting. Suggestions include putting newsletters in other locations, using the newsletter or a shortened version, creating outdoor signage, leverage partner organizations, and hardcopy mailing to every household. Also spoke about changes to the website. Committee shared they will be meeting once again to narrow their focus solely on the website and on a potential mailing.
- Board made suggestions about the newsletter which included—adding the address, hours of operation, Facebook and Instagram handles.

4. Directors Report

- Active Aging
 - The City sent out a press release on February 27, 2026 announcing the COA has joined the State Active Aging Initiative.
 - During the last meeting we spoke about active aging initiatives such as meditation—a mediation session has been set for May 2026.
- Senior Transportation
 - Representative Connolly visited the Ralph and Jenny Center to speak about his support for the Senior Transportation Program.
 - The contract for the program will expire on March 20, 2026, the contract is currently out for bid.
- Visit from St. Theresa's School
 - Tania will be bringing students to play intergenerational bingo on March 26th, all are welcome to attend.
- Listening Sessions and Drop In Hours
 - Received notice from Tess at Mass Senior Action; group would like to postpone the listening sessions until April.
- Vote held to postpone April meeting until April 10th due to Good Friday.
 - All in favor.

5. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 12:15pm

6. Next Meeting: April 10, 2026 at 11:00am